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The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, January 14. 1696.

Queſt. 1. *I Live near St.* Albans, *and have often heard many ſtrange Traditions among the Inhabitants of its ancient* Fame, *and great buildings both above and under Ground. They have alſo a Story of the Fellow who executed* St. Albanus, *who now gives name to the* Town, *that he ran into a certain Wood near the* Town, *where his eyes dropt out and he miſerably periſht. Pray what d'ye find of theſe things in ancient Hiſtory?*

Anſw. Firſt of the Town, and then for the *Martyr*, of the former *Camden* gives a good account, but ſays very little of the *latter*. And here we ſhall firſt recount the ſeveral *Names* by which it has been *known*, and then the condition 't has been in, under its ſeveral Maſters. The firſt name we can find it ever had, was *Verulam*, or *Verolam* in the time of the *Romans*, for we don't reckon *Ptolomy's Orolania* a different name, only, a different, and perhaps erroneous way of writing it. 'Twas call'd by the Brittains *Caer-Municep.* By the Saxons, *Watlingceaſter*, and *Verlamceaſter*, of which more anon, and laſt of all St. *Albans*, or rather that New Town is ſprung from the rubbiſh and aſhes of the old famous *Verulam*.

For its *Fortunes*, it ſeems to have been conſiderable under the *Brittains*, before ever the *Romans* came amongſt 'em. Mr. *Camden's* opinion is probable enough, that was *Caſſibelons royal ſeat*, which *Cæſar* ſet upon and ſtorm'd at two places after he had paſt the *Thames* and rowted his Army. His reaſon for it becauſe this Town is deſcrib'd in *Cæſar* as ſcituated among the Woods and Marſhes, but he know's of no other Marſh or Mere any where near it; and he's alſo of opinion that *Caiſho Hundred* in which it ſtands, took its name from the *Caſſij*, a people which liv'd thereabouts in *Cæſar's* time and ſubmitted to him. But why not us, well from *Caſſi-belon* himſelf, their famous King, and the *Generaliſſimo* of the *Brittains*. Whence it ſhould derive its name is not eaſy to gueſs at ſuch a diſtance. Unleſs from the *ſwiftneſs* of the River that paſſes by it, *Giver*, or *Ver* ſignifying *ſwift* in the *Britiſh Language*, and accordingly *Bede* deſcribes it, as falling down *meatu rapidiſſimo*, in his Hiſtory of St. *Alban*: But whatever it was under the *Brittains*, 'twas certainly ſufficiently famous under the *Romans* which appears even from the name by which *Nennius* calls it in his account of the Cities, which has been alſo found in old Inſcriptions; and that from *Caer*, a City, in the *Britiſh* Language as *Cair* in the *Egyptian* or *Coptic*, *Kir* in the *Hebrew Cariha*, in the *Chaldee*, and *Phœnicians*, or *Punic*, and *Municipium*, a free Town, whoſe Inhabitants had many priviledges, and among others were Citizens of *Rome*: Nothing being commoner then this *marriage* of *Languages*, as one calls it, when names of places eſpecially are made a mixture of the Natives and Conquerors ſpeech, as *Caer-Leon*, and twenty others. Vaſt ruines there may ſtill be perceiv'd of the *Roman* buildings, and much more was formerly diſcover'd as huge vaults, and *ſubterranean paſſages*, *Roman Bricks*, *Pavements*, *Coyn*, &c. among which laſt, the moſt remarkable and common is that with a Horſe and *Taſcia*, on one ſide, and *Ver.* on the other, which *Taſcia* ſignify's the *Tribute-penny* as *Taſe*, in old *Britiſh*, a *Tribute*, whence very probable the word *Taſk*, ſtill us'd in our Language, and much in the ſame ſignification. But theſe favours coſt 'em dear, *Verulam* being ſackt by the *Brittains* under *Bonduca*, *Boadicia*, *Boodicia*, or *Vodicia* (for ſo many ways at leaſt we find her name written,) relict of *Praſutagus*, King of the *Iwvi*, whom *Gildas* calls *Immunda Leæna*, tho they ſeem by *Tacitus*, his account of 'em to have ſcap'd better then the Colony at *Malden*, where their very *Temple* was taken; whither they had retreated as their laſt refuge, and a prodigious ſlaughter made amongſt 'em, whereas here, he ſays, they only plundred the Riches, they cou'd eaſily come by, and left the *Forts* and *Caſtles* uninterrupted. However, it held up it's head again, and grew conſiderably famous under the Saxons, by whom 'twas call'd *Verlam*, or *Werlamceaſter*, and *Watling-Ceaſter*, (not *Warling-Ceaſter*, as 'tis miſprinted in *Bede's Lovain Edition*) the latter from the famous *Roman* way, *Watling-ſtreet*, which croſs'd the *Iſland*, and was croſt it ſelf near *Dunſtable*, by the other, call'd *Ikenwild*, (both which perhaps we may ſometimes, trace, for the diverſion of our Reader) 'twas after this beſieg'd by the *Brittains* under *Uther Pondragon*, *Neckham*, who was born here, calls him *Arthur*, and ſays he lay *ſeven years* before it, tho 'twas ſoon recover'd again, however between 'em both, 'twas at laſt totally ruin'd, or if you will, *tranſplanted* to the other ſide of the *River*, the place of St. *Alban's Martyrdom*, where was a Monaſtery built by King *Offa*, to the Honour of that *Proto-Martyr* of *England*, and ſo largely endow'd that a Town ſoon roſe in its Neighbourhood, taking name from the ſame St. for whom our famous *Mede* had ſo juſt a reſpect, and whoſe memory we all ought to honour; which we hope may be done without believing one half that's in his *Agonal*, or the account of his Life and Paſſion, found it ſeems, in the *Britiſh* Language in a little cloſet in the Wall as *Abbat Eadmere* was levelling the Foundations of a Palace in the midſt of the old City. Nor yet need we believe all that *Bede* tells us of the ſame good St. who liv'd ſo many hundred years before he was born, any more then all the miracles which the Roguiſh *Monks* invented of him to *enrich* his *ſhrine*; and themſelves, in after ages. However, take what *Bede* ſays of him, and every one is at liberty to believe as much on't, or as little as they pleaſe. And he tells us in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, *Lib.* 1. *Cap.* 7. *p.* 8. And onward, that "in the Reign of Diocletian, when the tenth per-"ſecution began under him in the *Eaſt*, 'twas "carry'd on here in the *Weſt* by his Colleague "*Maximianus* with great cruelty, and came at laſt "into *Brittain*. That while it raged here, *Alban*, "who was then an Heathen, receiv'd a certain "*Clergy-man*, into his Houſe to ſhelter and hide "him from his perſecutors, by whoſe holy Life "and Example he was himſelf at laſt converted. "When, his gueſt being diſcover'd, and the Soul-"diers coming to ſearch for him and apprehend "him, St. *Alban* chang'd Cloaths with him, and "being dreſt in his Garments. *Suo ipſius habitu id eſt Caracalla*, was led away to judge in his ſtead. we deſire the Reader to ſtay a little before he paſſes any farther, for this very *Caracalla*, as odd as it looks, is to be turn'd into a Saint, and Canoniz'd as well as St. *Alban* that wore it, being we ſuppoſe only another name for the famous St. *Amphibalus*. The ſtory we have in Bp. *Usher's Primord.* and St. *Aſaph's* account of ancient Church-Government in *Scotland*: That our *Jeffrey Monmouth*, having unluckily miſtaken *Amphibalus*, in the Hiſtory of St. *Alban*, for the name of a man, which indeed ſignifies a *Cloak*, he joyn'd him with that Saint as his Fellow-*Martyr*, and *Hector*, taking the *Lie* at the *Rebound*, ſtill preters the Cloak, and makes a *Scotch-Biſhop* of it. Nay, ſo far had it at laſt prevail'd that our *Camden* himſelf was carry'd with the ſtream, and ſwallow'd the *Gudgeon* of this *ſham Amphibalus* as well as the reſt, mentioning him in his *Britannia*, as St. *Alban's* Fellow *Martyr*, who, as *Bede* ſays, was ſo far from being a Biſhop that he

he was never baptiz'd, being no other then him who was to have been his *Executioner*, tho converted by his miracles. However we have now got a *Cognomen* to this famous Cloak or Bishop which you please, and the *Roman Calendar* one wou'd think cou'd do no less then solemnize his memory under the more sounding Name of *Amphibalus-Caracalla*.

But we have so much work with the Cloak we are like to forget the Saint, and all his Miracles, who as *Bede* goes on, (who had indeed himself a Miraculous Faith if he believes but one half of what he himself writes) as he was going to his *Martyrdom*, was so much in hast to get at it, that he made the River give him way, like another *Jordan*, and past it dry-shod, and yet more, caused a Hugeous Spring of water to rise on the Hill where he afterwards stood, and on which he was beheaded. As for him who did the fact, he went not into the wood to shed his eyes, as our Querist says in the Tradition, if we can believe the forementiond Historian, who assures us that his eyes dropt out in the very same moment that the Saint's head fell to the *Ground*.

Quest. 2. *A person who is but too much concern'd, has of late often read a certain question in your late* Saturdays Mercury, *and doubts not but some body has there given you his exact picture. He suspects one of his Neighbours drew it, but misses the man: However, I have very good news to tell you, for the Gentleman's* disenchanted *upon't, and is convinc'd, and almost converted from* Brute *to* Man: *He has look't at his picture so long that he now loaths it; He pares his nails, washes his hands, and walks upon two Feet just like a man, says he will love his wife, and she shall be an equal* proprietor *with himself. Now he says, where be our spoons, and other utensils in the house, a Language he never before was us'd to, when they were only* his, *and not his* wives, *who scarce durst say her Soul was her* own. *Now I think there ought to be publick notice given of such a wonderful* Reformation, *to let the age see 'tis not* impossible, *and for an example to all* tyrannizing *husbands that govern their wives with* Arbitrary power, *that they may rather seek to rule by Love, the surest and safest way to prevail on our sex*, &c.

Answ. One Instance of some good done by our *Mercury*, and of a *man* who has done what becomes a reasonable Creature, repented of what's amiss, and been *civil* to his *wife* whom he ought most to *love*, and whom he has formerly injur'd, and we heartily wish we had *one example* more to throw in t'*other scale*, and cou'd among all our papers find an Instance of a *penitent Wife*, who was equally troubled for having disoblig'd her husband. We are sure one that's concerned in the next Questions has need enough of such *penitence*, not that we ever yet cou'd observe in cases of this nature, but both parties were something to blame where one was extreamly so, we mean as to an *unquiet Life*. Some husbands knew no difference between *Superfluity* and *Tyranny*, and many *wives* believe there is *none*. In a word, humility, meekness, patience, gentleness, and forgiveness are necessary on *both sides*; and if the woman shou'd be the *gentler*, that man ought to be the *wiser*, and without some such thing as *mutual forbearance* of one other, 'tis impossible for either to live *easy* or *happy*.

Quest. 3. *Pray which is the greatest fault, for an undutiful wife to tell about that her husband has beaten her, when he has not, or for the husband to beat such a wife, and what punishment is fit for such a husband and such a wife.*

Answ. The case of a *mans beating his wife* was one of the first decided, in the first vol. But still that reaches not the present. However, it's so very *bad a Remedy* that 'tis well if the *Disease* it self won'd not be less troublesome, be it what it wou'd. But whether is the worse *crime* of the two, his actually *beating* her, or her false report that he has *beaten* her, and *exposing* him to the World? For the former, tho hardly any thing can wholly *excuse* it, there may have been perhaps many an high *provocations* which may a little lessen it; besides 'tis a private injury only, whereas the other is publick, a malicious *falsehood* it self, as represented, and injurious to her *husbands reputation*, which be he never so bad, 'tis her *interest* to *preserve*. Tho' on t'other side had he really *beaten* her, and without a *cause*, if any *cause* can *justify* it, 'twou'd have tempted a prior woman to make her *complaints* to some *friend* or other, tho still no *wife*, or honest woman wou'd chuse to make it publick. In a word, we think, both these practices are so very *bad*, that to be ingenious, we scarce know which is *worse*. Tho to the latter part of the question we can more easily return an answer. For if it be ask't what *punishment* is fit for such a *Husband* and such a *Wife*, we reply, the most proper punishment for 'em in our opinion, wou'd be that they shou'd still live together, and *plague* one another, for they *agree* so very *ill*, that 'tis *pity* they shou'd ever be *parted*.

Quest. 3. *What shall be done to the wife who calls her husband Coward, and tells him she can beat him when she will, if he strike her, and after this swear the peace against him, who never struck her, nor so much as threaten'd her?*

Answ. For the first, if she gives you *ill Language*, stop her *mouth* with a *Kiss*, and show you are no *Coward*, by not being conquer'd by a *womans anger*, and if you can kiss her whether she will or no, 'twill be a convincing argument that you are still the *stronger*, and wou'd prevent her going any more to the Justice, if you cou'd but conclude all at home by such a private arbitration. But if she has been there already, and sworn falsely against you, the best way to be reveng'd on her is to use her so *kindly* for the future, that if she shou'd swear the peace against you a hundred times, no body might believe her.

Quest. 4. *What shall be done to the woman, who when her Husband mildly admonishes her, and tells her he's the Head, shall answer in the greatest scorn imaginable. The Tail you are?*

Answ. The truth is that's a little of the *scornfullest*, but we know no Remedy but to tell her that if you be the *Tail* she's still *something under it*.

Quest. 5. *What shall be done to the wife, that prays to God almost every night to cut her hands off before morning, and bids her children pray so too*, cum multis aliis. *For such a wife there is, and what can a poor man do with her?*

Answ. Nay, here's enough on't, for one mortal husband: Without an, &c. And indeed so *much* and so *bad* that we wou'd not willingly believe, were't not *notorious* that many a bad husband wishes his wife cold that he might get another, and why mayn't it be so too sometimes in *wives*. We answer he's to pray as fast that she may be *forgiven* as she does that he may be *destroy'd*, which is the way either to change her mind, or to have her mind, or to have her curses at last fall on her own head, tho if you take this *advice*, you need not fear that they shou'd *causelessly* come upon yours.

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